SULTAN'S EX-WAR MINISTER TALKS WITH FRANK CARPENTER ABOUT MOROCCO, ITS PEOPLE AND THE FUTURE OF COUNTRY

(By Frank G. Carpenter.)
On the Steamship Emir,
Off the Coast of Morocco.

ONE of the best-posted men on Morocco and its future is Mr. Walter B. Harris, the well known correspondent of the London Times. He has resided in the country during the greater part of the past sixteen years, and has traveled by caravan over the most of it. Some years ago he made an expedition from Fez to the oasis of Tafilet, and he has written the only good book about that part of Morocco. Mr. Harris has also traveled widely in other Mohammedan countries; he has gone on camel back over Arabia, and he speaks the Arabic fluently. During his stay in Fez he was a close friend of the Sultan, and he has now an intimate acquaintance with some of the most powerful of his ministers. He is also closely associated with Si el-Mohdi el-Menebbi, who was for a long time minister of war, and who, as such, through his influence with his majesty, Abdi-el-Aziz, practically controlled Morocco. Menebbi lost cast when he failed to quell the rebellion of Bu Hamara. He was then forced to leave the Sultan's cabinet, and is now living as a British subject in Tangier. He is one of the most progressive of the Moors, and will probably be heard of in the regeneration of Morocco. I shall give you an interview which I had with him further on in this letter.

MENEHBI WOULD MAKE A HANDSOME OTHELLO.

MOROCCO'S GREAT WAR MINISTER PLAYING TENNIS.

ONE OF THE SULTAN'S SOLDIERS

SULTAN'S SOLDIERS RECEIVING THEIR PAY

Kidnaped by Raisuli.

To return to Mr. Harris, he was the first of the foreigners to be kidnaped by Raisuli. He was living in his beautiful home on the seashore, just three miles from Tangier, when 2,500 brigands, with Raisuli at their head, carried him off. They held him in captivity for more than three weeks, but released him without ransom. During this time Mr. Harris had a close view of Raisuli. He describes him as a man of strong character and a bluffer. He says that the Sultan has but little power; that he is afraid of the two great rebels, Raisuli and Bu Hamara, and that he has bribed them to keep the peace. Bu Hamara has now about one-fifth of Morocco under him, and Raisuli, with comparatively few soldiers, is growing rich off the country east of this city. He is, I understand, laying up money since he got the big ransom for Perdicaris, and is buying business properties here in Tangier.

Dare Not Live at Home.

Mr. Harris thinks it rather hard lines that he dare not live at home, although the British have a treaty with the Sultan which provides for the protection of foreigners. His villa is within fifteen miles of the fortifications at Gibraltar, and within an hour's walk of the walls of the Sultan's chief port. Nevertheless, its owner has to live at one of the hotels in the city for fear of kidnapers. The Governor of Tangier keeps fifty soldiers guarding the villa and its contents, but still it is unsafe.

At the same time Morocco insists on all the rights that she has under her treaty with foreign nations, and the foreigner is allowed no favors. The other day Mr. Harris attempted to sent two white peacocks to a friend who was living at the hotel at Algeciras, across the strait. He brought them to the custom house, but was told that they could not be sent out of the country, as there was nothing in the treaty with Great Britain about the exportation of peacocks.

The Wealth of Morocco.

Mr. Harris tells me that Morocco is a poor country. The people have but little money, and the riches of the few have been magnified a thousand fold. He thinks that the total revenues of the Sultan are not more than $5,000,000 a year, and that in good times. Just now they are less, as the government is out of favor, and the people will not pay taxes. He tells me that Morocco is badly farmed. The lands are fertile, but the soil is only scratched, and there is no immunity from the exactions of the tax-gatherers.

There are vast plains in the South, which yield large quantities of wheat, but transportation is so high that it is impossible to take it where it is most needed. There are also laws against the exportations of grain, and as a result most of the wheat is consumed in and about where it is raised. Some of it is carried to the hills near by, for the mountain tribes have to rely upon the plains for their flour.

Railroads vs. Donkeys.

I asked some questions about railroads. Mr. Harris says that the Moors object to them, on the ground that they would be a foreign innovation, and also because they would put the donkeys, mules and camels out of business. As it is now, the whole trade of Morocco goes by caravan, or by sea from port to port. The freight rates per animal in the interior are comparatively low, and the charges for board and feed at the Moorish hotels are almost nothing. In Fez it costs about four cents a day to feed a camel, and less than three cents a day for a horse or a mule. The ordinary native can be taken care of for a little more. The expenses on the road are also cheap, but the loads carried are so small that an animal will soon eat up the value of its freight.

As to the transportation of foreigners, the cost is enormous. The distance from Tangier to Fez is about 170 miles, and in the United States a railroad journey of that distance, at three cents a mile, would cost, including baggage, just $5.10, and the time required would be less than five hours. The ordinary foreigner cannot make Fez in less than a week, and the cost of the journey there from Tangier will be from twenty to thirty dollars a day. I thought of making the trip, expecting to spend a month on the way there and back. One of Cook's dragomen said that I should have to pay $35 per day for all the time of my absence, making my one month's journey, including a stay of two weeks at Fez, cost me $1,050.

For this trip I should have to employ a soldier or so, and would have required about three mules to carry my baggage, as well as mules for myself and guide and cook. I should have had to camp out every night, and would have been lucky had I reached Fez in one week. In connection with the American legation at Tangier I found a dragoman who offered to give me the same accommodations for $600. At the same time there was great danger of being captured by brigands on the way and held for ransom; and, on the whole, I did not think the trip worth the risk.

Our American minister, who made the journey from Tangier to Fez a month or so ago, spent twelve days on the way. He had a large company of soldiers, furnished by the Sultan, and the Sultan paid all his expenses, amounting to many thousands of dollars. I understand that the minister took the ladies of his family with him, but, inasmuch as their expenses also came out of the Moroccan government, Uncle Sam will probably have no objection.

When one or other of the great powers of Europe takes possession of Morocco, and I doubt not this will soon come to pass, one of the first things will be the building of a railroad from Tangier to Fez. If the French should be awarded the protection of the country they will probably extend their railroad, which now goes from Temcen to the capital of Morocco. Neither route offers any great mechanical difficulties, and both would probably pay. A short line from Fez to one of the ports of the Atlantic and from Marrakech to the same coast would eventually be profitable. The Moors and Berbers will object to such roads at first, but they will soon learn their value. Last year there was a famine in and about Fez, and a large part of the flour consumed had to be imported. That which cost $10 a sack at the seaports sold for more than $19 a sack in Fez, the extra $9 going to transportation. Had there been a railroad that flour would not have cost more than twenty-five cents per sack for freight, and it could have been sold for $10.50 in Fez, making a clear saving to the people of $8.50 on that amount of their bread bills.

A Talk With Si El-Mehdi El-Menehbi.

It was through Mr. Harris that I was given an audience with Si el-Mehdi el-Menehbi, who as minister of war under the Sultan, and as his favorite adviser for a long time, practically controlled Morocco. He was in high favor until the rebellion of the so-called Son of the She Ass, who claimed to be the elder brother of the Sultan, but after that became unpopular and was forced to resign. His excuse for leaving Fez was that he wanted to make a pilgrimage to Mecca. He went there via the Mediterranean, and after coming back settled in Tangier, becoming a British subject, and thereby protecting himself against any possible persecution from his enemies who had taken his place in the favor of the Sultan.

I understand that Menehbi saved a lot of money while he was one of the Sultan's chief officials, and that, instead of burying it in the walls of his house at Fez, o runder its floors, as is sometimes done by the Moors, he deposited it in the Bank of England to his own draft. This prevented his enemies getting possession of his fortune. After his settlement in Tangier he withdrew the money, and he has now invested a great part of it in a large apartment house and other buildings there. His own home is one of the finest in the city, and I doubt not it will compare favorably with any private home in the country. It was there that I visited him.

Traveling upon my mule through a street so narrow that I could almost touch both walls with my hands, I rode by the Kasbah or the Governor's palace, past the soldiers and officials sitting at the gate of the city and on out into the country. About a half mile from the city gates we came to a walled enclosure with a plain, unpretentious door. We knocked upon this and it was opened by negro slaves, who took charge of our mules. We passed in through a sort of porter's lodge, where a half dozen other slaves were sitting, and found ourselves in a great court or park surrounded by Moorish buildings, the rooms of which looked out upon it. This park was largely made up of gardens filled with beautiful flowers and semi-tropical plants and trees.

One section of it contained a tennis court, with a cement floor as smooth as marble, where the ex-minister delights to play tennis with his European friends. There is a central path through the gardens, and down this we walked until we came into two great reception rooms, where the war minister receives his men friends. We passed through the first set of parlors, which are floored with mosaic and luxuriously furnished, and then came into a large room walled with glass looking out upon the Atlantic Ocean. The house is built on a high bluff hanging right over the sea, and the mountains of Spain were in plain sight across the way. We could hear the surf roar as it dashed against the rocks below.

At the entrance to this room stood two tall clocks of the kind that sell in the United States for $500 apiece, and they played the chimes at the striking of the hours. The tiled floor was covered with Oriental rugs, the great divans were upholstered in rich red Morocco leather, and about the walls were cases containing rare china and swords, rifles and other weapons, inlaid with gold and silver. The surroundings were those of a man of taste, and this was my impression of Menehbi when he appeared.

A Typical Moor.

Let me tell you how he looks. He is a typical Moor of the better class and of a kind one does not expect to find in what is generally known as one of the black spots of this black continent. Si el-Mehdi el-Menehbi would make one of the handsomest Othellos who ever trod the stage. He is tall, straight and fine looking, and his Moorish costume makes him look taller. He has a light complexion, and, like all Moorish men, wears a full beard, his whiskers being brown and curly and as fine as silk. A broad forehead with large hazel eyes was to be seen below his white turban. His nose is straight and his cheek bones high. His costume consisted of a long white woolen gown, or burnouse, with a hood at the back, and the sleeves of this were so wide that they showed his forearm to the elbow. The skin was as white as yours or mine. As we chatted he now and then smiled, showing a good set of strong teeth, and he twice perceptibly yawned.

Morocco in a Sad Condition.

During my conversation I asked him as to the condition of the country. He replied that Morocco was in a sad state. The government has practically no control over the tribes, and the people are now refusing to pay taxes or to send in tribute to the Sultan. The army has dwindled to a few hundred troops, and the Sultan has no soldiers to speak of outside of Fez. When Menehbi was at the head of the government his majesty had about 16,000 troops, and his power was such that the various tribes sent in tribute and presents worth many thousands of dollars. Every tribe sent one or more horses, many sent large sums of money, and there were other girts of value. Upon the last tribute day the receipts were practically nothing.

I here asked Mr. Menehbi as to the safety of foreigners traveling in Morocco at the present time. He replied that the question as to whether the stranger would reach his destination safely was very uncertain. He might get through uninjured, or he might be captured by one of the tribes and killed. It is a matter in the hands of God, with the chances against rather than for the man. In other words, God might protect the foreigner, but the chances are that He will not.

The Military Possibilities of the Moors.

Menehbi as head of the war department of the Sultan for years and commander-in-chief of the army, should know much about the military possibilities of Morocco. During our talk I asked him whether his people made good soldiers. He replied:

"Both the Berbers and Moors are brave to an excess. They have excellent fighting stuff in them, and if the times comes when the tribes can be organized and welded together, an army of a hundred thousand men could be raised. As it is now, each tribe furnishes a certain quota of mounted men and these altogether make up the army. One large tribe may furnish 2,000 soldiers, a second a regiment and a third only a company. Such soldiers are officered by the chiefs of their tribes, and they are subordinate to the general of the sultan. There are many quarrels among the tribes, and it is difficult to harmonize and organize them. They are always warring among themselves, and it would be only upon religious grounds that they could be formed into a compact army organization."

Might Be Conquered, But Not Subdued.

"Could not any one of the great powers of Europe easily conquer Morocco?" I asked Mr. Menehbi.

"Such a power might conquer us," replied the former minister of war, "but it could not subdue us. Our people are fearless, independent and liberty-loving. They are fond of their religion and of their country, and especially of the localities where they live. Many of the tribes would fight until the last man had dropped, and in this land of the Atlas mountains it would be almost impossible to bring us into permanent subjection."

"Do you think that the Algeciras conference will be to the benefit of Morocco?"

"Yes, but much better provisions might have been made. The number of troops set aside for the protection of foreigners at the ports will be totally inadequate. Only 2,500 are provided for the eight towns and 5,000 could be employed in Tangier alone."

The Morocco of the Future.

"Do you think that changes will soon take place in Morocco?"

"That depends much upon the government and how the people are handled. If they could understand that Morocco could hold its independence and still have modern reforms I think many new things could be introduced. A strong government is needed, however, to make the experiment. When I went to London as the Sultan's ambassador I entered into certain arrangements as to railroads and other modern innovations, but the situation in the country and the antagonism to foreign ways were such that I was not able to carry them out. I believe, however, that Morocco has a future, which will be far different from its past. We have a country here which is wonderfully fertile. We can raise grain of many kinds, and fruit that is surpassed by that of no other land. Cattle, horses and sheep will thrive almost everywhere, and our people make good stockmen and farmers. Morocco is also rich in minerals. There is coal right here near the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Atlas mountains have deposits of gold, silver, copper and iron. The country has never been prospered, but its possibilities are undoubtedly great."

A Message for the American People.

In closing our conversation, I asked Mr. Menehbi to send, through me, a few words of greeting to the American people, saying, "Your excellency is about the most progressive man in Morocco, and I should like to take from you a word of greeting to what we consider the most progressive nation of the western world."

The Sultan's war minister smiled at this. His face, however, soon grew serious, and he said:

"I have a great admiration for you Americans, and I hope I shall soon be able to cross the Atlantic to visit you. The only message I have for you is that you should study this country, and cultivate closer trade relations with it. We have here about ten million inhabitants and we are now large consumers of cottons and other things which Americans make. Our homes are chiefly lighted by American petroleum, and our people wear clothes made of stuff grown by you. Your raw cotton, however, goes to England; and the English do the weaving and sell us the goods. I understand that you have cotton mills of your own. Why not make the goods yourselves and get all the profit? We Moroccans are friendly to you, and we would be glad to trade with you; but as it is our chief supplies come from the various countries of Europe, and mostly from England, Spain, Germany and France."

INTERESTING TOUR THROUGH VILLAGES OF UNCHANGED ORIENT

By William T. Ellis.
Seoul, Korea, February 9.

TO get close to the actual facts of missionary work in any country, as well as of the true political and social conditions it is necessary to move out from the capital or port cities and to sojourn for a time in rural parts. So I have been out seeing the real Korea, itinerating among country villages where there are churches, and in the meantime seeing at first hand what is said to be the most picturesque people in the Orient. The "how" of missionary work in this country may be set forth by a recital of this concrete experience.

Sometimes the missionary on tour puts his outfit on a little Korean pony and then, mounting on top of it, rides. At other times he walks. Women missionaries often travel in chairs, borne by coolies. In the present instance we walked, and two coolies carried our packs containing folding cots, bedding, food and cooking utensils. It is impossible for most white persons to subsist in health upon the Korean diet of rice and pickled vegetables. As to the matter of sleeping—more of that later.

The Orient Which Changes Not.

A pedestrian tour through rural Korea is better worth while than the same amount of time spent in Seoul. The first afternoon we traveled for five hours over the narrow paths between rice fields which serve for road in Korea; they are the "wayssides" of the familiar parable of the sower.

Wheeled vehicles are unknown outside of the cities, though the Koreans have a ponderous two-wheeled ox-cart which they claim was the original wheeled vehicle. Unlike Japan, where only a hand plow is used, the Koreans cultivate their fields with oxen. The last of the rice crop had been gathered and the threshing floors of the farmhouses in the villages were very busy places. There are no solitary farmhouses in this country; the farmers live in villages and go out to their fields early in the morning.

Rural life here suggests the orient of the Bible. Every man's threshing floor before his house is simply smooth, hard earth. There he threshes out the grain with a long flail, the whole family often engaged at once. One olive-skinned 12-year-old boy who, bare to the waist, kept rhythmic time with his father and mother on the threshing floor, irresistibly suggested the Nazareth Boy as modern painters have pictured him. The threshing of rice was conducted as sociably as a quilting bee, a number of women seated on a threshing floor beating the grain from the stalks with sticks, and chattering while they worked. These country women wore turbans and did not have their faces covered, as is common on the streets of Seoul. I noticed also two women grinding at a mill, and the larger horse-power mill, such as suggested the saying, "It were better for such a man that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the depths of the sea." The missionary says that many Bible figures that need explanation to a western mind are instantly clear to a Korean.

The Missionary With a Gun.

In many of the villages through which we passed, churches are established; and occasionally we stopped to speak to some native Christian. The "Moksa," or missionary, is a person of distinction, and his passage an event. Of course, all speech is in Korean; there is no such widespread knowledge of English as in Japan.

As we traversed the country-side the absence of the shrines and idols that mark every Japanese highway was noticeable. Now and then we saw a neglected booth, erected for the propitiation of some evil spirit. At a pass in the mountains we came to a tree with stones heaped around it; it supposedly embodied an evil spirit, and every traveler casts a stone at it. The hillsides are covered with grave mounds, regarded as sacred, and before some of these are tablets, now and then sculptured crudely into human form. Broadly speaking, however, Korea may be regarded as a country without a religion.

The country itself is beautiful, largely mountainous, but with fertile valleys. There are many wild fowl, geese, ducks and pheasants, and it is quite usual for the itinerant missionary to carry a gun to provide the meat for his meals. In the interior the missionary occasionally bags a deer or a wild boar; and there is always the possibility of meeting a tiger. Some missionaries, who are a hundred miles from a beefsteak, eat pheasant three times a day because they cannot afford bacon or ham.

From Fifth Avenue to Korea.

After a fifteen-mile tramp, we reached at dusk the village which was our destination. The welcome that was given to the missionary was really beautiful to behold. Old men and young, with little children in their train, came forward with beaming faces, and, with the ancient salutation of "Peace." They caught the missionary's hands, squeezed his arm or affectionately patted his shoulders. Yet they had never seen this particular "Moksa," as "shepherd," before. The field is that of Rev. Dr. H. G. Underwood, one of the missionary veterans of Korea, but he is absent on a furlough, and his duties have fallen to Rev. Earnest F. Hall, a young man who was for several years assistant pastor of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City. Mr. Hall is still supported by the Fifth Avenue Church as its representative in Korea. Many times during the days we were together I wondered how often he thinks of the contrast between Fifth Avenue congregations and these Korean villagers, who, in truth, personify the simple life.

The best room in one of the largest farm houses in the village was made ready for us by the easy process of the family's tumbling out, since the room was absolutely devoid of all furnishings except a chest for best clothes and treasures. From the ceiling, which was a lofty one for Korea, being seven or eight feet high, hung various articles, such as a cheese-shaped hat box. The entrance to the room was through a paper-covered doorway four feet high by two wide. There was a small window, likewise of paper, on either side of the room. The dimensions of the latter were eight feet by twelve, so that the missionary congratulated himself on our roomy quarters. Eight by eight is the normal room.

Sleeping in an Oven.

The most interesting feature of the room was the floor. This was of dirt, covered with oiled paper. Underneath it ran the flues of the household fire, so that the floor was hot to the touch. This is the Korean method of heating a house, and the natives sleep in comfort on the hot floor. Morning and evening a brush or wood fire is lighted—the fuel market on the main street is one of the sights of a Korean city—and "the time of the evening smoke" is as definite a period as sunset. Over this fire the meal is cooked, the flames and smoke passing underneath the living room and coming out on the other side of the house.

No provision is made for ventilation in the Korean home, and a foreigner nearly suffocates. The conditions are very favorable to the growth and comfort of other residents than human and one of the often futile performances of the itinerating missionary, ere he retires, is to sprinkle a circle of yellow powder on the floor about each leg of his cot, and over the bedding. One does not have to possess an uneasy conscience in order to suffer from troubled dreams in a Korean house. Probably the endurance of centuries of vermin has inured the Korean to the lesser evils of political oppression. As to germs, the missionary must forego imagining; perhaps the very room he occupies has been vacated for his benefit. Several missionaries have died of typhoid fever so contracted.

A TYPICAL KOREAN VILLAGE.

The farm house in which we sojourned was built, like the Syrian khan, about a courtyard. In the same building with us was stored the year's harvest, and the manner in which a patient big-eyed ox shared our roof-tree made very vivid the Bethlehem story. A large part of the village population followed us into the courtyard, and filled the doorway, watching us eat. Finger holes made in the paper windows glistened with black eyes that watched the strange foreigners, who did not know how to sit on the floor properly, and neither used chop sticks nor ate rice. Our shoes and clothes and outfit (especially the Indian moccasins, which are a great convenience in lands where shoes are never worn indoors) were all objects of childlike wonder on the part of the simple, kindly peasants, some of whom showed their good will by bringing us fresh eggs and the big, delicious Korean persimmons, the size and color of ripe tomatoes.

Christianity's Remarkable Growth.

While we were at supper a Korean Christian entered with the news that in a small village two hours farther on where no missionary had visited, a group of believers (that word is commonly used in Korea) had recently sprung up, numbering ten families. They had been visited each Sunday by the Christians from our village and given instruction, but they wanted the missionary to visit them and establish a catechurien class. Mr. Hall's program was too full on the present tour to admit of this. In our stopping place the elder further reported, there were forty candidates for baptism to be examined.

This particular community illustrates the phenomenal Christianization of this country, which is now less than a generation removed from the rank heathenism and a seclusion which earned for it the title of "The Hermit Nation." The settlement comprises thirty-eight houses and of these twenty-five are Christian.

Practically the entire village turned out for the evening service, most of them carrying Bibles and hymn books. The singing was led by the missionary, there being no organ. The congregation is dependent upon his visits for new tunes, though they retain with surprising correctness the ones formerly learned. Mr. Hall also taught the people, by having them repeat the words after him, the first question and answer of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which has lately been rendered into Korean. The time-honored figure, "drank in every word," best expresses the attitude of the congregation toward the sermon.

While the missionary preached, I watched the people. All except the children were in white. Many of the women, who were curtained off from the men, had babies on their backs or at their breasts. Some of the men wore the wide, horn spectacles of the Chinese scholar. All except the few unmarried ones had their hair done up in top-knots, with a brain squeezing black net band around their heads. Most wore the horsehair inner cap, but unlike the men in city churches, none had his broad-brimmed stove-pipe hat.

The children wore clothes of many colors—pink, yellow and green predominating. Candidly, all would have looked better for an application of soap and water; the Korea has not yet fully learned the godlessness of dirt. None of the people showed the foreign influence in their clothes, as is the case in Seoul, where even the top-knot is beginning to disappear. In the latter place I saw a boy in church whose dress consisted of Japanese imitation of American shoes; stockings with black, yellow and green stripes fastened with a purple garter; white, baggy Korean trousers; a red coat, tied under the arms with lavender ribbon; a pale green sweater peeping above it at the neck, and a brown plush scarf about his throat somewhat like the hangings of an old-fashioned pullman car. His headgear was a Japanese military cap. Korean children, like their elders, sit on the floor during service with the foot of one leg crossed over the thigh of the other; and, like their elders, they are quiet and attentive.

Putting Converts Through the Mill.

After the service was over, the elders gathered around the missionary and proffered formal request that he come as soon as possible and spend a few days in teaching them the Bible. Mr. Hall had to put them off with a vague promise, as his field is too large for him to do more than look over it. I was interested to note that, while elsewhere missionaries have to adopt devices to attract hearers, such as English classes, cooking classes, etc., in Korea the people seem to want sim-

(Continued on Fourth Page.)